

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES
July 25, 2007

Chair Knox White called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:35 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL** – Roll was called and the following recorded.

Members Present:

John Knox White
Michael Krueger
Robb Ratto
Robert McFarland
Eric Schatmeier (arrived 7:40)
Srikant Subramaniam (arrived 7:40)

Staff Present:

Obaid Khan, Supervising Civil Engineer
Barry Bergman, Program Specialist II

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. May 23, 2007

Commissioner Krueger moved approval of the minutes for the May 23, 2007, meeting minutes. *Commissioner Ratto* seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

3. **AGENDA CHANGES**

There were none.

4. **COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

- a. Multimodal Circulation Plan

This subcommittee has not met.

- b. Pedestrian Plan
 - c. TSM/TDM Plan

5. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Madeline Murphy, 2518 Janis Circle, believed that many people do not want to use the parking garage near the theater, and would rather park in the outlying areas. She noted that her neighborhood was consumed by many people parking there for the theater and the nearby restaurants. She noted that many residents cannot park in front of their own

houses because of this situation, which she believed would get worse. She would like to see discussions of permit parking to begin for this neighborhood.

Chair Knox White requested comment from staff regarding potential parking permits. *Staff Khan* advised that he had spoken with Development Services Department, and that they were working on a parking study. They had been collecting data since last year, and were preparing memos and data to be presented to the Transportation Commission in September or October; following that, it would be presented to the Planning Board and City Council. In terms of residential permit parking, staff has noted that such programs have resulted in a substantial drain on resources in other jurisdictions. They had found that the creation of residential permit parking required a funding source to establish enforcement, processing and collection of fees. The results from the parking study would be available upon its completion.

Matthew Anderson, 924 Grand Street, noted that everyone he had spoken to on Grand Street was opposed to its redesignation as an island arterial. He believed the redesignation would be detrimental to their neighborhood and to their efforts to deal with traffic and safety issues on Grand Street and the surrounding areas. He added that he spoken to Mr. Khan about a recent incident where a blind man was struck by a vehicle turning off of Grand Street, which reignited people's interest in the safety issue.

Staff Khan noted that the street functional classification system was part of the Transportation Master Plan policies that are moving forward at this time. The City has hired Dowling Associates as the consultant to work on the General Plan Amendment; their first task was to do the traffic model and develop the scenarios and analysis. Following that, they will go to the CEQA process that will require the City to produce a programmatic EIR, which will involve an ample public comment period. He noted that the issue would come before the Transportation Commission several times.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There were none.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7A. Current Status of the Broadway/Jackson project. *Discussion.*

Staff Khan presented the staff report, and noted that the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA) and the project consultant (Kimley-Horn) were present in the audience. He summarized the scope and layout of this project, and noted that a feasibility study was completed in April 2006, following by the examination of various alternatives in improving access from Alameda to I-880, as well as access and circulation in both Alameda and Oakland. Since the feasibility study has been performed, ACTIA has hired consultant Kimley-Horn to work on the evaluated alternatives; they will move forward with a Project Study Report (PSR) as required by Caltrans. The goal of the task to the consultant was to produce the PSR, which will be approved by Caltrans.

Art Dao, Deputy Director, ACTIA, provided an update on the development of the Broadway/Jackson/I-880 access improvement projects. He noted that the existing funds will not be enough to deliver this project, and that state and federal financial assistance would be necessary. Their goal is to use the PSR as the platform to compete for that funding.

Dave Dickinson, consultant project manager, described and discussed the feasibility study. He noted that there were some issues with ground water with respect to constructing the exit from the Posey Tube. He noted that the curve of a proposed ramp coming out of the Tube could only accommodate design speeds of 23 mph, so they were looking at different options to reduce the speeds in the Tube and enhance safety. With respect to the proposed I-980 ramps, he believed they could provide some benefit. However, he noted that the merge distance between consecutive on- and off-ramps was much less than half of standard. In addition, the ramps violate FHWA policy regarding placing new local ramps on the freeway-to-freeway connector such as this stretch of I-980. They also explored whether the Broadway off-ramp could touch down at Webster or Harrison, so that Alameda-bound traffic could turn smoothly into the Webster Tube. The feasibility alternative examined touching down at Harrison; however, it introduced another intersection at Harrison and Sixth. They were examining whether it could be brought all the way down to Webster, depressing Harrison about five feet in order to get a reconstructed off-ramp at Harrison. They also examined whether the I-980 off-ramp could be dropped directly into the Webster Tube, but it was determined not to be feasible due to the profile grades and trying to get three lanes of traffic into two lanes.

Mr. Dickinson noted that they wanted to finalize the geometric analysis, and to understand the origin/destination studies. He displayed the areas where traffic counts were also being performed, and believed this data would provide a credible traffic forecasting and operations analysis for this project.

Commissioner Krueger inquired whether the context-sensitive alterations near the senior center in Chinatown could be seen as a short-term issue, or as an alternative to the reconfiguration of the ramps for the sharp right turn out of the tube. *Mr. Dickinson* replied that they were exploring that issue, and suggested that it may be both. He noted that it seemed to have promise as a long-term viable solution, and if the pedestrian conflicts could be removed, that ramp may become an in effect dedicated freeway on-ramp. He noted that it was signed and striped for that function.

Chair Knox White noted that the staff report stated that Oakland had recommended the elimination of Alternative B-1, and inquired whether those issues had been resolved in order to allow that alternative to move forward. *Mr. Dickinson* replied that Oakland had partnered with them, and that he had not heard anything to indicate that they might turn down Alternative B-1, although some elements may need to be addressed. They continued to move forward in exploring B-1, and had not been told to stop.

Mr. Dickenson noted that they eliminated the conflict of the Pulte building, and that while some of the hurdles still existed, he did not consider them to be insurmountable. He noted that the 23-mph curve was a challenge, and believed that it should be posted 5 mph below that.

7B. Project Update: for I-880/High Street Seismic Retrofit Project and 42nd Avenue/High Street Access Improvements. Discussion.

Staff Khan presented the staff report. He noted that staff's concerns were related to access along frontage roads, although some of those concerns had been addressed by providing some direct access from the I-880 Southbound off-ramp that will connect directly to 42nd Avenue, providing better access to Alameda.

Stanley Gee, project manager, Caltrans, made a presentation describing the seismic retrofit, and displayed the ongoing project on the overhead screen. He noted that Caltrans had determined that in the event of a major earthquake, the structures would be vulnerable to significant damage. They determined that it would be better to completely replace the structures, as detailed in the proposal. The cost of the project would be approximately \$75 million, and the new structure would be designed to meet current highway standards, including lane width, shoulder width and ramp design. The new freeway will be somewhat wider than the existing structure, which currently has little to no shoulders. He noted that the biggest challenge would be to clear the right of way needed for the project, which would impact Home Depot. He added that there would be a significant impact to the parking lot area because of the widened freeway, reconstruction of the ramp, as well as the reconstruction of E. 8th Street. Caltrans was in the process of working out that issue with Home Depot, and the cities of Oakland and Alameda. The solution included eliminating a portion of E. 8th Street that would significantly reduce the impact of the Home Depot parking lot. Their intention was to not replace that portion of E. 8th Street.

Mr. Gee noted that there would be a minor impact to the Shell gas station, and that the front of the property of the East Bay MUD pumping plant will have to be taken for the reconstruction of Oakport Street. He described the acquisition of the property formerly held by the Japanese engine company, as well as the Western Tool property. He advised that the goal of the project was the seismic retrofit of the structure, not adding lanes. An important feature of the project was the reconstruction of the interchange at 42nd Avenue and I-880. He noted that they were scheduled to start construction in early 2009, and that the actual construction period should take about four years. He displayed the actual staging of the project on the overhead screen.

Commissioner Ratto inquired who was responsible for signage at the intersection near the right-hand turn at High Street that allowed access to Alameda Avenue. *Mr. Gee* believed it was the City of Oakland's responsibility. *Commissioner Ratto* noted that when he made that right-hand turn, there was no stop sign, yield sign or any other signage, which he believed was hazardous due to the auto traffic driving through at a high speed.

Commissioner Krueger inquired whether the closure of E. 8th Street would have any effect on the freeway access. *Mr. Gee* replied that it provided a frontage road with fairly light traffic. He added that it would be made into a *cul de sac* by the City Oakland.

Staff Khan noted that E. 8th Street provided local circulation for the Oakland side; the concern regarding the Alameda side was the internal circulation to access Home Depot and I880. The new project would provide better access to Alameda from 29th Avenue southbound I880 on-ramp to reach 42nd Avenue.

Public comment.

Madeline Murphy believed there would be an impact on the Fruitvale Bridge when people exit from Fruitvale to Alameda Avenue. She was concerned there would be many lane closures.

Mr. Gee noted there would be a tremendous amount of construction going on, with a great deal of equipment; he acknowledged there would be disruption, but that they would maintain the same number of lanes on the freeway as currently exist during peak periods. He noted that High Street would be maintained open, but may need to be closed for very short periods of time late at night in order to do some of the overhead work. He noted that they did not intend to have any long-term street closures, including High Street. He noted that any work that could not be done safely at night, or that would cause noise impacts, would occur during the day. He added that they would work with the City.

Close public comment.

Staff Khan noted that some closures and delays were inevitable, but that Alameda will work closely with Caltrans and Oakland during this time.

No action was taken.

7C. Draft Action Plan for SOV Trip Reduction at Webster/Posey Tubes and Bay Farm Island Bridge. Outcome: Comment from TC and Approval of Draft Work Plan. Discussion/Action

Staff Bergman presented the staff report, and noted that this item grew out of the joint meeting between the Transportation Commission and the City Council on May 7, 2007. the Council had indicated that they were interested in having the Transportation

Commission focus on developing strategies to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicle trips at the Webster-Posey Tubes and the Bay Farm Island Bridge. Based on the meeting, staff prepared an action plan. He noted that the key points were:

1. The City's Municipal Code will require some modifications to enable the TC to undertake this activity, which will be discussed in Item 7D.
2. The levels and characteristics of the traffic at Bay Farm Island Bridge, including the portion of traffic related to schools and accessing I-880.
3. To determine what additional measures can be used to address traffic concerns at the two locations.
4. Consideration that whatever is done could have impacts on other activities that are underway, such as the TMP.

The last section of the report outlined the action plan, and described the tasks, as well as a general timeframe. Page 3 listed the specific tasks, including the bullets from Exhibit 1. Staff intended to develop a coherent, cohesive strategy for focusing on the reduction of single-occupancy vehicle trips.

Commissioner Schatmeier noted that the report stated that traffic counts would be taken when school was in session "if needed," and inquired what circumstances would occur that the counts would not be needed during school session. *Staff Khan* noted that the intent was not to be redundant, since a substantial amount of data had already been collected when school was in session.

Commissioner Krueger noted that page 4 discussed working with AUSD to determine their interest in pursuing funding for school buses. He inquired whether that would be paid for by the school district. *Staff Bergman* noted that staff had not discussed that issue with the school district yet, and that additional funding opportunities were to be explored.

Commissioner Schatmeier noted that there was substantial bus/transit service on Bay Farm Island, and suggested that marketing existing transit services should be included in the strategies. He suggested looking at origins and destinations to see if whether existing transit service could be used.

Public comment.

There were no speakers.

Close public comment.

Commissioner Krueger noted that he had heard anecdotal evidence and complaints about the reliability of the AC Transit school service, and that parents drove their children to school because of it. He suggested that the Transportation Commission investigate that potential issue, and to work with AC Transit to make the bus more attractive. He noted that the bus either showed up late or not at all.

Commissioner Ratto suggested that discussions with AUSD take place to develop a formalized carpooling program for students, as well as incentives for people to participate in it. *Staff Bergman* replied that staff had spoken with AUSD regarding staff participation in an EcoPass program. *Commissioner Ratto* noted that he would not let his first grader ride the bus to Earhart School, but would feel more comfortable with letting a younger child with a neighbor in a car pool.

Commissioner Schatmeier noted that Marin County had a School Pool program that also included walk-pooling and bicycle-pooling, enabling numbers of parents to accompany their children to school and reduce single-occupancy trips.

Chair Knox White believed the Safe Routes to School maps for Otis School should be completed. He did not believe it belonged on this particular action plan. *Staff Khan* noted that staff examined Otis and Lincoln because they were close to Bay Farm Island, and that the Safe Routes to School maps were being developed.

Chair Knox White believed that the problems should be identified first, and that the data should be collected in such a way that the problem spots could be clearly determined and identified. He added that the overall goal was to reduce the congestion in the two areas or corridors. He hoped that the language to reduce the single-occupancy trips would be stronger. He supported Councilmember DeHaan's suggestion to think outside the box, as if cost were no factor, in order to develop more innovative solutions. He believed the Transportation Commission could begin working on the solutions as data are collected, and that the pedestrian plan deadlines should not be pushed back as other work gets in the way. He noted that the Transportation Element had already been pushed back to May 2008. He noted that with respect to the Safe Routes to School program, there still seemed to be an inability for the School District or the City to take ownership of the program. He would like to see a meaningful partnership between the two entities so that the programs such as those brought up by *Commissioner Schatmeier* may be implemented.

Commissioner Schatmeier noted that Marin County had a Transportation Authority to hire someone to coordinate the various programs at the schools. He noted that the task forces associated with each school should be coordinated, including parents, school district personnel, the City Public Works staff, and students.

Staff Khan agreed that ownership of the program would be the key to any kind of success in the school area. He believed that enforcement was also critical, requiring the involvement of the Police Department in that process. He noted that Public Works meets with the Police Department on a monthly basis to address school-related issues, as well as other issues to maintain coordination. He believed that a similar structure with the school district would help in this process, and invited comment from the Transportation Commission to improve the coordination.

Commissioner Ratto moved to accept staff's recommendations in the Draft Work Plan, and to further prioritize additional strategies. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

7D. Proposed Revisions to Alameda Municipal Code Regarding Reassignment of Technical Transportation Team Responsibilities, Modification of Transportation Commission Responsibilities and Appeal Process for Transportation Operational Decisions. *Outcome: TC to comment and endorse the proposed revisions to Alameda Municipal Code.*

Staff Khan summarized the staff report, and described the background of this item. He noted that a joint meeting between City Council and the TC had been held on May 7, 2007. At that time, City Council directed the TC to look into some specific projects, discussed during Item 7C. It was discussed that because the TC did not have the authority to look into specific project development processes or work on specific projects, staff was directed by Council to make some modification to the Municipal Code to allow the TC to work on some specific projects if directed by City Council. He noted that the Transportation Technical Team (TTT) responsibilities will be shifted to the Public Works Director. The Public Works Director's decisions may then be appealed to the TC, and the TC decisions may be appealed to City Council. He noted that the City Council would be the ultimate authority in that chain. He noted that the Public Works Director had the discretion to send items to the TC if he or she felt that some of the issues may require policy input, or if it had substantial opposition in the community. Staff planned to make a change to the Alameda Municipal Code to allow the TC to look at some specific projects as directed by City Council.

Staff Khan noted that staff intended to include in the TC's new responsibilities items related to Planning Department development projects, including new development and environmental documents. Another point of discussion was the method by which the communication went to the Planning Board. Instead of providing the information as part of the public comment, staff was directed to provide a memo specifically stating that the recommendations came from the TC.

Commissioner Schatmeier noted that the main change seemed to be between who the appeal body was, and who the current and proposed authority was.

Chair Knox White noted that this change made the Public Works/Transportation Commission/City Council connection more consistent with other departments, where staff makes a recommendation and the appointed body acts as the appeal body.

Commissioner Ratto believed there was an anomaly on the chart on page 3, under "Proposed Authority." He noted that the TC was noted listed under any items except for "Angled Parking," and inquired why that was singled out. *Staff Khan* replied that angled parking had Council-designated zones where it could be placed. He believed that was the thought behind in modifying the Code.

Public comment.

There were no speakers.

Close public comment.

Commissioner Ratto believed this was a wonderful report, and liked the matrix as well. To make it clear that TC decisions can still be appealed to the City Council, he suggested that in the Background portion of the write-up, the last line of the first paragraph should be changed to read, “The Transportation Commission (TC) will be the *initial* appeal board”. He suggested that on page 2, the second bullet under “Proposed AMC Revisions” be changed to read, “If operational decisions by the Public Works Director are appealed, such *initial* appeals will be ...” He suggested that in the matrix, “Current Appeal Body” should be changed to “Current *Initial* Appeal Body.” Also, “Proposed Appeal Body” should be changed to “Proposed *Initial* Appeal Body.”

Commissioner Krueger suggested the inclusion of the following language, “As previously, the Council remains the final and ultimate appeal body.”

Chair Knox White inquired about the disposition of the report following this meeting. *Staff Khan* replied that there were over 30 changes, and that staff wished to ensure the TC understood the goals and purpose of the changes. He advised that this document would go to the City Council on August 21, 2007.

Commissioner Ratto moved to accept the staff report with the suggested clarifications in language, including the two excluded items from the staff report. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

8. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Staff Khan advised that the parking study for Webster Street and the West Alameda commercial district will come to the TC in September or October. The Economic Development Strategic Plan is tentatively scheduled for the November Transportation Commission meeting. Staff may bring the Local Action Plan from the Climate Protection Task Force to the TC either in October or November. The August meeting will include a presentation from the Congestion Management Agency on the 29th and 23rd Street project. Staff has requested that CMA attend the meeting to present that project; staff has concerns related to access from Park Street to the freeway.

Staff Bergman advised that Commissioner Knoth has officially resigned from the TC, and staff has been working with the School District to find a recommended replacement. He hoped an appointment may be made within a month or so. He noted that the City’s website has been undergoing design changes, with the ultimate goal of being more user-friendly, especially in accessing documents.

Chair Knox White noted that the TC minutes will be available on the web site in a more timely manner going forward.

Commissioner Ratto inquired whether this meeting was meant to be televised. *Staff Khan* noted that he was concerned about that issue, and did not know why it was not televised. He noted that he would report back to the TC.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

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